United Nations S/2017/890

Security Council

Distr.: General
24 October 2017

Original: English

Letter dated 19 October 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the report on the work of the Security Council for the month of July 2016 during the presidency of Japan (see annex). The document was prepared under my own responsibility, following consultations with other members of the Council.

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Koro **Bessho**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

17-18750 (E) 301017

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 19 October 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Japan (July 2016)

Introduction

During the month of July 2016, under the presidency of Japan, the Security Council held 23 formal meetings and 18 consultations of the whole, issued 11 press statements, adopted 7 resolutions and 3 presidential statements and issued 1 presidential note on working methods. The Council held 3 meetings with troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

Selection of the Secretary-General

Japan, as President of the Security Council for the month of July 2016, coordinated in detail the finalization by the Council of the modalities of the straw polls, and organized the first straw poll on 21 July.

The Security Council also discussed the selection of the next Secretary-General at the consultation of the whole on 25 July under the item entitled "Other matters", during which Council members discussed the confidentiality of the straw polls and the way forward.

During the month of July, nine informal meetings with the candidates for the position of Secretary-General were held, a process that was introduced in June 2016 after extensive discussions within the Security Council.

Africa

Sudan and South Sudan

The Security Council issued a press statement on 1 July that noted with alarm the increased conflict in Wau, South Sudan, and called on all armed parties to cease hostilities. There was a meeting on 7 July of troop-contributing countries for UNMISS. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, conducted a briefing. A press statement was issued on 9 July that condemned the fighting in Juba and the separate attacks on United Nations and diplomatic officials that had occurred in Juba on 7 July.

On 10 July, informal consultations of the whole were held. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations briefed the Security Council on his views on the background and developments surrounding the incidents, as well as on the status of the severe restrictions imposed on UNMISS movement in Juba. Council members strongly condemned the clashes and demanded an immediate end to the violence by all concerned, as well as control and discipline over military forces. The Council also discussed the regional force being considered by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) as well as methods for fortifying UNMISS. The Council issued a press statement after the meeting.

The Security Council met again on 13 July for a briefing on South Sudan from the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. He described large-scale displacement, civilian deaths and violations of United Nations protection of civilian sites. He insisted that UNMISS and humanitarian actors be allowed free movement and access. He also noted an IGAD communiqué calling for a troop increase and the creation of an intervention brigade, which had also been endorsed by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. The Under-Secretary-General concluded by urging the Council to consider an arms embargo in the light of deliberate attempts to derail the peace agreement of August 2015, and recommended a one-month technical rollover of the UNMISS mandate. During informal consultations, Council members and the Under-Secretary-General were joined for interactive discussions by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMISS, Ellen Margrethe Løj, who participated from Juba by way of videoconference. Discussions focused on the possibility of intensifying violence, the command and control of the Sudan People's Liberation Army, the need for political pressure and political dialogue, approaches for fortifying UNMISS and the imposition of an arms embargo and targeted sanctions.

On 29 July, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2302 (2016) to authorize a technical rollover of the mandate of UNMISS until 12 August.

Somalia

On 7 July, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2297 (2016), which extended the authorization of the African Union Mission in Somalia until 31 May 2017. China, Egypt and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland made statements after the vote.

Somalia and Eritrea

The Security Council held consultations of the whole on 20 July to discuss the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea. The Council heard the report from the Chair of the Committee. With regard to Somalia, many Council members voiced concern about the present situation, while noting progress on the political discussions, and stressed that the Council must continue to support the political process.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

A briefing and consultations of the whole on the Democratic Republic of the Congo were held on 7 July. The Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson, briefed the Security Council, stressing his concern with regard to the increase in political tensions due to electoral delays. He also expressed concern about recent attacks on civilians in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. He said he was encouraged, though, by the resumption of cooperation between the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Democratic Republic of the Congo also took the floor under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council. Active discussion by Council members about the situation was conducted in the consultations of the whole.

On the basis of the above consultations, the Security Council issued a press statement on 15 July that stressed the crucial importance of a peaceful and credible electoral cycle, in accordance with the country's Constitution, for stability, development and the consolidation of constitutional democracy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Council, among other things, also underscored the

urgent need to convene an open, inclusive and peaceful political dialogue among all stakeholders focused on the holding of elections, and expressed support for the decision taken by the African Union to undertake consultations on that dialogue.

Central African Republic

The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Atul Khare, briefed troop- and police-contributing countries in a private meeting on 8 July. That was followed by a briefing in the Security Council Chamber and consultations of the whole. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and the Chair of the Central African Republic country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations, Omar Hilale, were invited to brief the Council under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council. The former presented outcomes of the strategic review on MINUSCA and its recommendations for the Mission's next mandate. The Chair of the Central African Republic configuration presented five areas of priority from the peacebuilding point of view. The Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations also briefed the Council in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic about his visit to the country from 24 to 27 May. The Central African Republic participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, but did not make a statement.

The Security Council adopted resolution 2301 (2016) unanimously on 26 July, extending the Mission's mandate until 15 November 2017. It decided that the Mission's strategic objective was to support the creation of conditions conducive to the sustainable reduction of the presence of, and threat posed by, armed groups. The Central African Republic and France made statements after the adoption of the resolution.

United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel

The Security Council had a briefing and consultations of the whole on 11 July. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Mohamed Ibn Chambas, briefed the Council and presented the first report of the newly combined UNOWAS office. As instability and terrorist networks were continuing to fuel extremism in the region, he urged the further strengthening of the Multinational Joint Task Force and increased efforts to meet the basic needs of civilians. In the consultations that followed, the merger of the Offices and the hope for increased synergies were discussed. Council members expressed concern about the various political tensions and cross-cutting threats to peace in the region, and in particular the humanitarian impact of Boko Haram.

Following those discussions, on 28 July the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2016/11), which welcomed the earlier briefing by the Special Representative, the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNOWAS (S/2016/566) and the merger of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel and the United Nations Office for West Africa, and reiterated the Council's continued support. Through the presidential statement, the Council commended the work of regional groups and neighbours in order to promote peace and stability in West Africa and the Sahel. The Council noted its concern with regard to the continued terrorism and piracy in the region.

Libya

On 22 July, the Security Council met in consultations of the whole to discuss the ongoing political situation in Libya, and in particular the challenges delaying progress and the existence of foreign terrorist fighters. Council members were briefed by both the Assistant-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Taye-Brook Zerihoun, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Martin Kobler. Council members expressed deep concern about the presence of foreign terrorist fighters and discussed ways to improve and strengthen governance in Libya. After the meeting, the Council welcomed the meeting of the Libyan political dialogue and the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord through a press statement, reaffirming their support for the Special Representative's efforts to bring together the parties concerned.

Also on 22 July, the Security Council adopted resolution 2298 (2016) by a unanimous vote. Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, the Council authorized Member States to acquire, control, transport, transfer and destroy chemical weapons identified by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in Libya, after such a course of action was adopted by the OPCW Executive Council. China, Egypt, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America made statements after the vote.

Western Sahara

The situation in Western Sahara was discussed at the consultations of the whole on 15 July under the item entitled "Other matters". Further discussion was conducted at the consultations of the whole on 26 July. The Security Council was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), Kim Bolduc. While welcoming the progress achieved thus far, Council members expressed the strong hope that MINURSO would return to full functionality as soon as possible and urged the resumption of direct negotiations for the provision of the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

Peace and security in Africa

On 27 July, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman, and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O'Brien, briefed the members of the Security Council on the ongoing challenges faced by West Africa in combating Boko Haram. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs underscored the need for more funding for the Multinational Joint Task Force so that it would be able to maintain the gains it had made. He cited high youth unemployment as a reason for terrorist groups' successful recruitment. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs warned that the humanitarian situation was difficult in the region as a result of violence, environmental degradation and extreme poverty. As an extreme example of the situation, he pointed out that, in the far northern region of Cameroon, the number of people needing immediate food aid had quadrupled to more than 200,000 since June 2015.

All members of the Security Council took the floor. They were united in their concern for the desperate humanitarian situation and cited poverty, terrorism, organized crime and climate change among the challenges facing the region. Some members emphasized the need to maintain protection for human rights while

combating terrorist groups. Members welcomed the progress of the Multinational Joint Task Force.

Peacebuilding in Africa

On 28 July, Japan convened an open debate at the ministerial level on peacebuilding in Africa, chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Fumio Kishida. The debate was based on a concept paper distributed by Japan (see S/2016/586, annex).

The Secretary-General made an opening remark. While noting the continued existence of conflicts on the continent, he stressed that such conflicts were not the whole picture, referring to improvements made in economies and living standards and the expansion of democratic space. He advised the international community to help both countries in need and developing countries, and that one way to do that was to invest in institution-building. The Secretary-General underscored several lessons learned with regard to institution-building during the past years, including that there was no one size-fits-all solution, that a solution should be rooted in political agreement and that the international community must understand that institution-building was a long-term process. The Secretary-General also stated that this last point was particularly important for the Security Council when it was designing mandates. In addition, the Secretary-General stressed that the Peacebuilding Commission provided an important platform to help focus the attention of relevant actors on long-term institution-building, to share lessons learned and to sustain the engagement of the international community. The Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Kenya, Amina Chawahir Mohamed, and the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, Smail Chergui, also made statements.

In addition to the members of the Security Council, 32 speakers participated. Many participants mentioned the need for predictable financing support for African initiatives. Member States highlighted their own initiatives on the continent, which demonstrated the serious attention given to the issue. On the same occasion, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2016/12) reaffirming the importance of the topic. It emphasized the fact that peacebuilding was an inherently political process. It also noted the important role the African Union and national strategies had in peacebuilding. It stressed that there should be long-term development strategies and efforts to address the root causes of conflicts.

Burundi

On 29 July, the Security Council adopted resolution 2303 (2016) by 11 votes to none, with 4 abstentions. The resolution requested the Secretary-General to establish a United Nations police component in Burundi for an initial period of one year to monitor the security situation and to support the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in monitoring human rights violations and abuses, and to strengthen the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on conflict prevention, including in Burundi. The resolution also requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council, in close coordination with the African Union, on proposals to enable the United Nations to facilitate the deployment of African Union observers, and to report on modalities for cooperation between the United Nations police component and the African Union observers. All members spoke after the vote.

Middle East

Lebanon

On 7 July, the Security Council held its periodic consultations of the whole on the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) concerning the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) (S/2016/572). Council members discussed the positive work of UNIFIL in the fragile situation facing Lebanon, in particular with regard to the state of terrorism and the issue of refugees in the country.

On 22 July, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2016/10) expressing its deep concern with regard to the continued vacancy of the office of the presidency. The presidential statement underlined that the vacancy and the resulting political paralysis hurt the ability of Lebanon to handle growing security, economic, social and humanitarian challenges. The statement also stressed that stability of Lebanon was important to the stability of the region as a whole.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The report of the Middle East Quartet,[1] which was released on 1 July, was actively discussed by the members of the Security Council at the consultations of the whole on 11 July under the item entitled "Other matters".

The quarterly open debate was held on 12 July. The Secretary-General highlighted the 10 recommendations of the Quartet report. He warned that time was running out, underscoring that, as negative trends grew more frequent, the prospects for a two-State solution grew more distant. Stressing that the failure of Israeli and Palestinian leaders to advance peace had created a vacuum which extremist voices had filled, he stated that recent incidents of violence had reinforced the mounting risks. The Secretary-General, referring to recent developments in settlement construction and expansion, emphasized that such settlements were in flagrant disregard of international law. The Secretary-General urged practical action from the parties, regional actors and the international community to secure peace in the Middle East. Speakers called for an immediate end to violence from both sides and new strategies to create peace. Many speakers also underscored the illegal nature of Israeli settlements.

Under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, 23 Member States, including Israel, took the floor. Under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure, the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations and a representative of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People participated in the open debate. Representatives of the Holy See and the State of Palestine were also invited and took part in the meeting.

Syrian Arab Republic

Consultations of the whole were held on the Syrian Arab Republic on 22 July to hear an update on the issue of chemical weapons in that country by the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Kim Won-soo. Security Council members reiterated their support for the United Nations and OPCW in fulfilling Council resolutions.

The Security Council also considered the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic in a briefing and consultations of the whole on 25 July. The Under-

[1] Available from https://fmep.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Quartet-Report-2016.pdf.

Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator said that "words are not adequate" to describe the situation facing Syrians (see S/PV.7744). He described increased fighting, affecting civilians and civilian infrastructure. He cited specifically the situation in Aleppo. The Under-Secretary-General said that the United Nations can help when it is given access. He urged the Council to increase pressure on the parties involved to ensure that the United Nations received adequate protection and access. He also called for an end to all sieges. All members took the floor in the chamber following the Under-Secretary-General's briefing. While all members expressed concern about the humanitarian situation, there were differences in opinion as to how it should be addressed. In the consultations of the whole that followed, the Council discussed some of the issues raised by the Under-Secretary-General, including his suggestion of a weekly 48-hour pause to allow humanitarian access by United Nations agencies.

Iraq

On 5 July, the Security Council issued a press statement condemning terrorist attacks in Baghdad. On 15 July, the Council was briefed with regard to its periodic consideration of the situation in Iraq and the relationship between Iraq and Kuwait. Iraq was invited to participate under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ján Kubiš, highlighted recent progress in the fight against Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Iraq, while noting that Iraq needed continued international support at that critical time. He informed the Council that Iraq had significant humanitarian needs and discussed ways in which the underfunded humanitarian appeal had a direct impact on the ground. He also urged Iraqi political and community leaders to prioritize reconciliation efforts.

Through the unanimous adoption of resolution 2299 (2016) on 25 July, the Security Council extended the mandate of UNAMI. Egypt made a brief statement after the adoption. On 29 July, a press statement on Iraq and Kuwait was issued.

Afghanistan

The Security Council condemned the terrorist attack in Kabul through a press statement issued on 23 July. Reiterating its serious concern with regard to the threats posed by the Taliban, Al-Qaida, ISIL and illegal and armed groups to the local population, the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces and the international presence in Afghanistan, the Council underlined the need to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of those reprehensible acts of terrorism to justice, and urged all States to cooperate actively with the Afghan authorities in that regard.

Europe and Latin America

Haiti

The Security Council met on 7 July, under the item entitled "Any other business", for a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on the political and security situation in Haiti following his visit to the country from 30 June to 3 July. The Under-Secretary-General expressed his concern that the political situation was in crisis owing to difficulties related to the selection process of a successor candidate for the presidency, following the expiration of the provisional president's mandate on 13 June. He also explained the electoral process, the security situation and the activities of the United Nations Stabilization Mission

in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Concern over the political crisis in Haiti was expressed by Council members. The Council also discussed political solutions to the crisis, the reconfiguration of MINUSTAH and a strategic assessment mission in line with Security Council resolution 2243 (2015).

Cyprus

A meeting of troop- and police-contributing countries was held on 20 July concerning the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of Mission, UNFICYP, Elizabeth Spehar, conducted a briefing. The Special Representative and the Special Adviser on Cyprus, Espen Barth Eide, briefed the Security Council in consultations of the whole on 25 July. Council members noted their strong support for the efforts by Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders to reach a settlement and the role of the United Nations in the negotiations. That was followed by the unanimous adoption of resolution 2300 (2016) on 26 July, extending the UNFICYP mandate until 31 January 2017.

Thematic issues and other matters

Bangladesh

The Security Council issued a press statement on 2 July condemning a terrorist attack that had occurred in Dhaka on 1 July. The statement urged that all those responsible, from perpetrators to financiers and sponsors, be held accountable and brought to justice.

Saudi Arabia

On 5 July, the Security Council condemned terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia through a press statement. The Council deplored the heinous and cowardly terrorist attacks in the cities of Qatif, Jeddah and Medina, and urged accountability for the perpetrators, urging all States to comply with measures taken to combat terrorism.

France

A Security Council press statement was issued on 14 July condemning the terrorist attack in Nice, France.

Non-proliferation

On 18 July, the Security Council held a briefing discussing the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015). Under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs addressed the progress of implementation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. He called upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to avoid ballistic missile launches, as they could increase regional tensions.

Also under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure, the Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, João Vale de Almeida, outlined the European Union's efforts as Coordinator of the Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. He was followed by the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations, in his capacity as facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), who urged all members to follow the provisions of the resolution. All members of the Security Council made statements. While all members noted the progress achieved under the Joint Comprehensive Plan

of Action, positions varied concerning the ballistic missile launches. Council members welcomed the facilitation efforts of Spain for transparency.

Under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations was also invited to participate.

Working methods

In response to the decision by the General Assembly, in its resolution 68/307, to conduct the elections of the non-permanent members of the Security Council about six months before the elected members assumed their responsibilities, the Council adopted a presidential note dated 15 July (S/2016/619). A product of intensive work on the part of the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions over several months, the note outlined measures to facilitate the preparations of newly elected members as well as to improve the selection process and preparations of the Chairs of subsidiary organs. In accordance with the note, the Council now invites the newly elected members of the Council to observe all meetings of the Council and its subsidiary organs and the informal consultations of the whole for a period of three months, as from 1 October immediately preceding their terms of membership, except in cases otherwise provided for in the same note. In addition, the note stated that the members of the Council should make every effort to agree provisionally on the appointment of the Chairs of the subsidiary organs for the following year no later than 1 October, with the informal process of consultations on the appointment of the Chairs of the subsidiary organs to be facilitated jointly by two members of the Council working in full cooperation.

On 19 July, on the day of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the first presidential note on the working methods of the Council (S/2006/507), the Council convened an open debate on its working methods under the item entitled "Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)". The debate was based on a concept paper distributed by Japan (see S/2016/585, annex), in which it proposed that the Council, with the participation of interested delegations from the wider membership, look at the implementation of the presidential note dated 26 July 2010 (S/2010/507) and other relevant notes to identify successful practices as well as possible shortcomings, and consider making necessary adjustments. Many delegations stressed the importance of the Council's continuous efforts to improve its transparency while ensuring its ability to act effectively and efficiently. While welcoming the improvements made in recent years, including the recent adoption of the note dated 15 July 2016, many delegations called for fuller and more even implementation of the presidential notes, and looked forward to the review and updating of the note dated 26 July 2010, including with a focus on implementation, as requested in the presidential statement dated 30 October 2015 (S/PRST/2015/19).

United Nations A/72/551–S/2017/891

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
1 November 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-second session
Agenda item 65
Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Letter dated 17 October 2017 from the Permanent Representatives of Germany, Namibia and Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Spain, together with Germany and Namibia, has the honour to transmit the Chair's summary of the second meeting of the Women, Peace and Security National Focal Points Network, co-organized by the three countries and held in New York on 21 September 2017 as a follow-up to the meeting held in Alicante, Spain, earlier in 2017 (see annex). This initiative was launched on 23 September 2016 on the margins of the general debate of the General Assembly.

We should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 65, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Christoph **Heusgen**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Neville Melvin **Gertze**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Román **Oyarzun**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations

17-19307 (E) 081117

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 17 October 2017 from the Permanent Representatives of Germany, Namibia and Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Chair's summary of the second meeting of the Women, Peace and Security National Focal Points Network

Women's participation in peace and security: conflict prevention and the security sector

New York, 21 September 2017

The Women, Peace and Security National Focal Points Network is a cross-regional forum of representatives of Governments and regional and international organizations. Launched in New York in September 2016, the Network aims to provide a space for the exchange of experiences and best practices on women and peace and security from the national and regional perspectives, and to advance the commitment of Member States to increasing the participation of women in peace and security policies and programmes at the national, regional and international levels.

The first meeting of the Network was held in Alicante, Spain, in April 2017. The two-day meeting, which focused on national action plans on women and peace and security, brought together over 100 national focal points, government actors and civil society representatives from 61 countries. The Chair's summary of the meeting was transmitted to the Secretary-General and circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council.[1]

On the margins of the general debate of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, the second meeting of the Network was held in New York on 21 September 2017, co-convened by Spain, together with Germany and Namibia, with the support of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). The three-hour meeting was attended by over 100 people, including focal points and national representatives from all regions, the United Nations and international non-governmental organizations. The meeting focused on promoting the participation of women and gender mainstreaming in conflict prevention and in the security sector, and on operational issues.

The opening plenary featured welcoming remarks by the three members of the Network Presidency: Ildefonso Castro López, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Spain; Patricia Flor, Director General for International Order, the United Nations and Arms Control of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany; and Selma Ashipala-Musavyi, national focal point and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation of Namibia. The opening remarks underscored the necessity for Member States to assume greater responsibility for implementing the normative framework on women and peace and security, working hand in hand with civil society and, increasingly, with regional organizations.

Francisco Javier Sanabria Valderrama, national focal point and Director General for the United Nations and Human Rights of Spain, moderated a panel discussion, which included the following participants:

(a) Lieutenant Colonel Rachel Grimes, Office of Military Affairs, Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations;

[1] A/71/927-S/2017/485.

(b) Captain Dariia Malakhova, Senior Expert, NATO Division, Government Office for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers, Ukraine;

(c) Lieutenant Colonel Nombuso Hlengane, Police Planning Officer, Police Division, Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

After the panel presentations, representatives of the following countries delivered statements on the theme of the meeting: Afghanistan, Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Italy, Norway, the Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Thailand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. These were followed by statements from the African Union and the European Union, as well as by representatives from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

Increasing the participation of women in the security sector

The 2015 global study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) extensively documented the operational gains of women's participation in United Nations police and troops, highlighting the key roles played by female officers in protecting civilians. The study also showed that the participation of women in United Nations military missions has progressed at a very slow pace.

At the meeting, the panellists shared first-hand experiences of women soldiers who had enhanced operational effectiveness on the ground by listening to female and male civilians and by incorporating their concerns and suggestions into military plans in order to provide them with better protection. Visible and invisible structural barriers to the representation of women in United Nations military missions were shared, including: lack of awareness among military departments of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions; limited knowledge of national action plans; insufficient or inaccessible information for women in the police, military or civil sectors about work opportunities in the United Nations; and the preference of commanders and selection boards for the deployment of male officers.

The establishment of gender advisers within the ministries of defence and interior, a whole-government approach and accountability mechanisms for the implementation of national action plans are therefore crucial for advancing the women and peace and security agenda. The panellists shared information on initiatives to boost the participation of women. These included gender-sensitive recruitment, training and promotion processes, the establishment of quotas and other temporary special measures for women, including exclusive training for female officers as part of their professional development opportunities, mentorship programmes, the creation of women's networks within the ministries to ensure organizational transformation and the review of deployment processes to identify the criteria that may have a negative impact on women's access to deployment or career development opportunities.

Member States also shared good practices for increasing the participation of women in their defence and security institutions. Brazil referred to the participation of military women in their contingent in Haiti and the existence of quotas for women in military academies. Chile reported that a regulation allowing women to become generals had been approved. Canada reported that its armed forces had established a directive to integrate Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions into planning, doctrine and operations, and the new national defence policy had introduced a commitment to women and peace and security and to gender equality, which had been endorsed at the political level. Civil society

organizations were invited to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the policy to ensure transparency, accountability and expertise.

The United Kingdom shared information on the upcoming launch of a senior-level military network in Vancouver, Canada, where attendees will be encouraged to sign up as gender champions. Bangladesh reported that the country is planning to host a ministerial preparatory meeting and highlighted Government efforts, through school programmes, to encourage girls to consider joining the military as cultural norms can be a challenge to female participation in the military.

Norway informed the meeting of the development of a document on the inclusion of gender equality in peacekeeping training and peace processes, which could be disseminated through the Network. Furthermore, women and peace and security commitments are included in Norway's armed forces operations and deployments through guidance on a "gender perspective in armed forces operations".

Representatives of civil society organizations at the meeting noted the importance of two components of peacekeeping that can contribute to increasing the participation of women: (a) strengthening the recruitment processes and the professionalization of women in the security sector; and (b) gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations from mandate to implementation. Moreover, ensuring gender analysis and information in all relevant areas (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform and protection of civilians) is fundamental and requires adequate resources and support from mission leadership. Concerns about funding cuts on gender issues in the reform of peace operations were also mentioned. Finland agreed with other representatives regarding the importance of implementing gender analysis in peace operations and noted that, in the framework of the national action plan, ensuring career opportunities, information campaigns and cooperation with media to increase the visibility of crisis management as a career choice are important milestones.

Advancing holistic approaches of prevention

Participants at the meeting commended the increased attention of the Secretary-General to the women and peace and security agenda and his prioritization of conflict prevention, and several also expressed support for his launch of the voluntary compact to eradicate exploitation and abuse in United Nations operations. The United Kingdom expressed support for the Global Call for Women's Participation in Peace Processes, which is intended to promote the appointment of women as special representatives and deputy special representatives of the Secretary-General, and called for an increase of funding for gender-related issues.

Several country representatives noted that training soldiers in gender equality issues and increasing the number of women in the security sector are not a panacea. Italy and Portugal pointed to the need for "more holistic conflict prevention" measures, noting that adding women to the security sector does not prevent conflict. Gender equality, women's human rights and development, which are key to the women and peace and security agenda, have to be addressed simultaneously. South Africa defended the need for greater investment in grassroots organizations and in local women's empowerment in order for those women to become actors in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and sustainable peace within their communities.

The European Union took the opportunity to comment on the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls, which was jointly launched by the European Union and the United Nations and aims to implement the women and peace and security agenda. This statement was applauded by attendees. Generic

standards of behaviour are being developed and will be disseminated to all European Union personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations. Those standards are also being shared with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for possible inclusion in United Nations missions.

The African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, Bineta Diop, commented that the inclusion of women in the troops deployed by the African Union had been an effective strategy for tackling sexual exploitation and abuse. The African Union was developing a zero-tolerance policy and a code of conduct regarding sexual exploitation and abuse that should complement existing tools for conducting judicial investigations and holding perpetrators accountable. She concluded her statement by reminding the meeting that the African Union Commission had reached parity between men and women at the top level, and that such parity needed to be achieved within the African Union troops as well.

National action plans on women and peace and security

Despite a great deal of effort by the international community to encourage Member States to use inclusive processes when developing national action plans on women and peace and security, just over 60 countries have formulated such action plans to date. There was thus a need for continued advocacy at the local, national, regional and international levels and for the exchange of specific and practical ideas and best practices on how to design and implement national action plans and accelerate the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, for which purpose the Network was instrumental.

The importance of national action plans as tools to measure the advancement of women in the peace and security agenda was stressed by all participants. Several speakers underlined the need to increase cooperation between ministries (whole-government approach) to ensure efficiency and better results. The need to develop national action plans, even in peaceful regions and countries, and the need for those national action plans to address emerging trends (such as migration and humanitarian crises, terrorism and sexual violence) were also underscored.

Several speakers updated the meeting on their countries' national action plan development processes. Brazil launched the development of its first national action plan on 8 March 2017. Namibia is in the process of developing its first national action plan, which is expected to accelerate the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in the country. South Africa is planning to hold a meeting on the development of its national action plan in October 2017. Canada is reviewing its first national action plan, and France will begin the review of its second national action plan in 2018. Both Germany and Spain launched their second national action plans in 2017. Chile reported that, for the first time, progress indicators had been included in its recently adopted second national action plan. Slovenia noted that the first meeting of the Network had informed preparations for its second national action plan, which will be completed by the end of 2017. Finland is developing its third national action plan. Italy launched its third national action plan with a flagship initiative for the establishment of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network. The Philippines announced the recent launch of its third national action plan and highlighted its national "informal peace table", where women, young people and people with disabilities are given the opportunity to contribute to the peace and security agenda. Norway is about to start work on its fourth national action plan.

Namibia, South Africa and Thailand are implementing other women and peace and security frameworks through their national measures and guidelines. The United States is producing a toolkit to support the development of national action plans,

which is to be launched later in 2017. Slovenia reported the organization of a regional meeting on women and peace and security, dedicated to national action plans of Western Balkan countries, in February 2018.

The European Union indicated that its Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy named gender equality and women and peace and security as cross-cutting issues, that 18 out of 28 members had a national action plan, that a regional action plan was currently being revised and updated and that a European regional network for women and peace and security would soon be created. The African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security reiterated that 19 African countries had created national action plans and that several subregional action plans were being developed.

Operational issues of the Network and coordination with other networks

UN-Women will serve as the secretariat of the Network from September 2017 onwards. It was requested that the secretariat develop operational guidelines for the functioning of the Network by the end of 2017 and that it prepare regular newsletters highlighting best practices, recent developments and specific projects that focal points may wish to share. Chile suggested that the Network be used, inter alia, as an observatory and information hub for members to access data, policies, laws and best practices of other countries. The United Kingdom observed that sharing information on programming between donors and recipients can increase coherence and prevent overlaps.

The participants also mentioned additional opportunities for the sharing of information. Norway mentioned the launch, in cooperation with the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, of the Global Women, Peace, and Security Index in October 2017. The United States suggested sharing best practices in countering violent extremism and terrorism at the meeting in Berlin in 2018. Thailand advocated for the creation of a network of female peacekeepers to promote information sharing among them.

Future opportunities for synergies with other relevant initiatives such as regional focal point networks, the African Women Leaders Network, the various networks of women mediators or networks of civil society organizations, such as the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, were also emphasized as fundamental to accelerating progress in this area.

Integration of civil society organizations within the Network

Participants highlighted the need to include civil society organizations within the Network, to clearly identify their roles, to include them in decision-making processes and to find alternatives and mechanisms to fund their projects and ideas. In this regard, Canada assured the meeting that Canadian civil society organizations would be attending the meeting of the Network in Berlin in 2018.

Italy, which is currently implementing its third national action plan, provided information about the involvement of civil society organizations in the completion of the plan and its future implementation, thanks to public funding. Italy further stressed that civil society organizations should be part of the consultations and decisions related to women and peace and security. Along with Italy, representatives from the United Kingdom and Thailand suggested that, to obtain a better understanding of first-hand experiences in conflict prevention and peacekeeping, the Network should continue to welcome the active participation of civil society organizations and to invite to its meetings women representatives of local communities and organizations dedicated to women and peace and security.

The need to find innovative funding models for women's civil society organizations working on the frontline of conflict prevention and countering violent extremism was also highlighted. South Africa shared its approach of collecting input from the grassroots level on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions, and called for the participation of the Pan-African Women's Organization in this network, due to its regular contact with local-level organizations.

Closing remarks

In his closing remarks, the Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director for Policy and Programme, UN-Women, Yannick Glemarec, emphasized the potential of national action plans to address structural barriers that prevent the participation of women in peace and security. The Assistant Secretary-General noted that the increased participation of women could help create a more trusted, representative and legitimate security apparatus and contribute to building stable and just societies. However, the proportion of women in police and military forces still remained low. Recent developments, such as the launch of the system-wide strategy on gender parity by the Secretary-General and the ongoing discussions between UN-Women, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support in the development of a dedicated strategy, in consultation with troop- and police-contributing countries, to significantly increase the numbers of women peacekeepers and police in peacekeeping missions would integrate the outcomes of the discussions of the Network meetings. Mr. Glemarec concluded his remarks by reiterating UN-Women's commitment as the secretariat of the Network to continuing to provide technical and logistical support for biannual and expert meetings, including the meeting in Berlin in 2018. A database of members of the Network created by Spain, as the initiator and Chair of the Network in 2017, would be regularly updated. The production of regular newsletters and the mapping of national and regional actions and initiatives related to women and peace and security would also be ensured.

Key action points

The following key action points were agreed upon at the second meeting of the Network:

(a) Implementation of women and peace and security commitments

(i) Increase efforts to nominate gender focal points among national police services in order to facilitate the sharing of best practices and the deployment of female police officers to peacekeeping operations;

(ii) Stress the importance of nominating a minimum of 20 per cent female police officers;

(iii) Review deployment processes and revise criteria and procedures that may have negative effects on women;

(b) Knowledge management and information sharing

(i) Secretariat to produce and disseminate a regular newsletter;

(ii) Secretariat to draft, in coordination with the Chair and the other two members of the Presidency, operational guidelines on the functioning of the Network by the end of 2017;

(iii) Network to serve as an observatory and information hub for members to access data, policies, laws and best practices of other countries;

(iv) Disseminate information about upcoming events (i.e., senior-level military network in Vancouver, Canada; regional meeting dedicated to national action plans of Western Balkan countries; launch of the Global Women, Peace, and Security Index);

(v) Disseminate knowledge products to the network (document on the inclusion of gender equality in peacekeeping training and peace processes and Global Women, Peace, and Security Index);

(c) Closing the gap between the global and the field levels

(i) Network to include civil society organizations among its members;

(ii) Secretariat and focal points to facilitate the participation of non-governmental organizations in the next meeting of the Network in Berlin;

(iii) Secretariat and focal points to facilitate the participation of grassroots-level women leaders/representatives in the next meeting of the Network in Berlin;

(iv) Secretariat and focal points to explore innovative funding models for civil society organizations working on the frontline of conflict prevention and countering violent extremism;

(d) Increased coordination with other networks and existing structures

(i) Secretariat to liaise with other national and regional initiatives;

(ii) Establish links with other civil society initiatives (including the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security and the Pan-African Women's Organization);

(iii) Plan the creation of a network of female peacekeepers.